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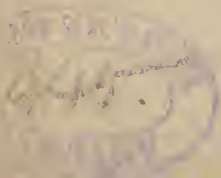
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1891

Man

Too Prolific?

H. S. Pomeroy, A.M., M.D.



HB P785i 1891

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IS MAN TOO PROLIFIC?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IS MAN TOO PROLIFIC."

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# THE ETHICS OF MARRIAGE.

By H. S. Pomeroy, M.D., Prefatory note by Thos. Addis Emmet, M.D., LL.D., and Introduction by Rev. J. T. Duryea, D.D., Boston. With an Appendix showing the Laws of most of the States and Territories regarding pertinent forms of Crime. 12mo, cloth, 150 pp., price, \$1.00, postage free.

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"In 'The Ethics of Marriage,' a subject of great delicacy and yet of commanding present importance is treated with the utmost propriety of tone and expression; with adequate knowledge, both theoretical and practical; with unflinching thoroughness and courage in the exposure of the evil, and with a reformatory purpose worthy of both the man of science and the Christian."

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"To the earnest man and woman everywhere, who has watched the reckless manner in which marriages are contracted, the wicked way in which the responsibilities are shifted and ignored, and the slow and sure defilement of society because the criminal classes are allowed to propagate their vile species, while Christian households and moral parents ignore their duty to this and to the next world, this book is almost like a voice from Heaven. Should reach its hundred-thousandth edition."

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**FUNK & WAGNALLS, Publishers,**  
18 and 20 Astor Place, N. Y.

# IS MAN TOO PROLIFIC?

THE SO-CALLED MALTHUSIAN IDEA

BY

H. S. POMEROY, A.M., M.D., *Leipsic*

BOSTON



WITH LETTER FROM  
THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M. P.

PARTIALLY A REPRINT FROM THE "ANDOVER REVIEW," FEB., 1891

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## PREFACE.

This matter has been treated briefly in "The Ethics of Marriage. '

This more extended consideration of it is made in the hope that it may answer some of the criticisms of "Malthusians"; and, to some extent, at least, allay the fears of those who are still troubled about the overpopulation of the earth and the ultimate starvation of humanity.

This idea seems to be prevalent throughout the civilized world, and is proving a powerful, though subtle factor in human welfare.

H. S. POMEROY.

158 NEWBURY STREET, BOSTON,  
July 11, 1891.



Dear Dr. Pomroy

I had a view of heavy  
good wishes for your renewed  
and apparently indefatigable  
efforts

I have no title to criticize  
or condemn and no compulsion  
to enter into particulars; most  
of all as regards the medical  
side of the subject. But I can  
pick up words & say enough to  
express my sense of the sound-

ness of the cause to which  
your labours are devoted; or  
of the degradation which, if caused  
in proportion as that cause  
should be defeated, threatens  
the whole human race within  
the range of the controversy.

Yours very devotedly

with every respect

Respectfully yours

W. S. Phillips

Acworth

Sept. 1890

# IS MAN TOO PROLIFIC?

## THE MALTHUSIAN IDEA.

THERE lies before me, as I write, a little pamphlet which has been sent out by the tens of thousands during the past few years, and which has—either directly or indirectly—exerted an influence so wide, that it is well-nigh impossible for the American physician in general practice to escape the evidence of it for a single day.

For several reasons I refrain from indicating its title ; one will suffice—it is literature of the kind which the law of our land forbids to write, publish, or send through the mails.

The opening sentence of this pamphlet is this : “ The law of population first laid down in this country by the Rev. T. R. Malthus in his great work entitled ‘ The Principle of Population,’ has long been known to every student, and accepted by every thinker.” On the next page we find Malthus’s law quoted, “ The constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for it,” and again, a few lines farther on, he is

quoted as saying, "Population when unchecked, goes on doubling itself every twenty-five years." On the next page we read, "The power of increase of the human species, according to John Stuart Mill, is indefinite, and actual multiplication would be extraordinarily rapid if the power were exercised to the utmost. It never is exercised to the utmost, and yet, in the most favorable circumstances known to exist, which are those of a fertile region colonized from an industrious and civilized community, population has continued for several generations, independently of fresh immigration, to double itself in not much more than twenty years. It is a very low estimate of the capacity of increase, if we only assume that in a good sanitary condition of the people, each generation may be double the number of the generation which preceded it."

The author adds, on the same page, "We shall take but a narrow view of the law of population if we confine ourselves exclusively to human beings. Man is but the highest in the animal kingdom, not a creature apart from it, and the law of population runs through the animal and the vegetable worlds." Then follows a long quotation from Darwin showing the naturally rapid increase of plant life,

and then we have the following quotation from John Stuart Mill: "The power of multiplication inherent in all organic life may be regarded as infinite. There is no species of vegetable or animal which, if the earth were entirely abandoned to it and to the things on which it feeds, would not in a small number of years overspread every region of the globe of which the climate was compatible with its existence." And again : "From a consideration of the law of agricultural industry, and an estimate of the rate at which the means of subsistence could be increased in old countries even under the most favorable circumstances, it may be inferred with certainty that these means of subsistence could not possibly be increased so fast as to permit population to increase at its natural rate."

The chapter closes with these words, "Wherever, then, we look throughout Nature we find proofs of the truth of the law, that there is a tendency in all animated existence to increase faster than the means of subsistence. This is the law of which Miss Martineau said that it could be no more upset than a law of arithmetic ; this is the law which John Stuart Mill regarded as axiomatic ; this is the law which the Lord Chief Justice designated an irrefragable truth. Controversialists may

quarrel as to its consequences, and may differ as to man's duty in regard to them, but no controversy can arise on the law itself, any more than on the sphericity of the earth."

Malthus, John Stuart Mill, Miss Martineau and the "Lord Chief Justice" (whoever he may have been) are doubtless a formidable array of authorities, and yet I shall take the liberty of controverting their view of the law of population and food supply. In the first place I object to the author's statement that Malthus's law "has long been known to every student, and accepted by every thinker." I object to it because it is not true; indeed the more able "thinkers" have thought upon the matter, and the more they have investigated the statistics and the "hard facts" of human life, the more have they questioned the value of Malthus's superficial *a priori* reasoning.

John Stuart Mill was a great thinker, and he saw many things more clearly than almost any other man of his time, and, as is usual in such cases, his fellow-men came to regard almost anything he uttered as profound wisdom, but John Stuart Mill was not omniscient, and one of the things which he did not know was that, "There is a tendency in all ani-



mated existence to increase faster than the means of subsistence." He simply conceived that idea, and, as it appeared to be sustained by facts which came under his observation he declared it to be a law, and the world generally accepted his statement.

Malthus and John Stuart Mill could not prove their theory, because proof lay hidden away in the undiscovered resources of the material world and in the undeveloped potentiality of the human brain, and how many hundreds or thousands of years it will require to complete the proof no one may venture to predict. The facts as to human life since their time clearly militate against their theory, and there is no good ground for believing that they will not continue to do so. In this matter of the law of population Malthus, and John Stuart Mill after him, mistook eddies for currents. On the one hand, they observed the rapid reproduction of human life where a hardy, virtuous yeomanry emigrated to a new country and lived simply but abundantly on the accumulated capital of virgin soil; and on the other they noticed the poverty, crime, and high death rate in large cities, and mistaking these eddies in the stream of human life for the stream itself, they evolved from their "inner conscious-

ness" their law of overincrease and consequent poverty. In common with many political economists, John Stuart Mill assumes that a simple, virtuous yeomanry living on fertile virgin soil constitutes an ideal phase of human existence; but this is not true; it is but a temporary matter, little more than an anomaly, indeed, and Nature, ever jealous for the preservation of "divine discontent" in her highest creation, man, soon crowds him into "moving on," or out. The hardy, virtuous yeomanry tilling a rich virgin soil has less care and more creature comforts than almost any other class of men, but is not in an ideal position because the conditions are too primitive and too easy; they have been found to conduce to multiplication of the species beyond the local supply of food, raiment, and other factors in human weal, and the surplus of population has been obliged to go elsewhere. This phase of overpopulation and of exhaustion of Nature's resources has taken place in many localities in our own New England; the whole process requiring, in some instances, no more than the time of two or three generations. I was myself born and bred in one of these sections and have studied the matter closely. These phases of civilization are misleading and have

more or less misled the political economist always.

New England furnishes us an excellent illustration ; we will study it. In the outset it must be conceded that no just estimate can be made of man's economic status when his intellect is treated as a secondary or subordinate matter. I take issue with the author of the pamphlet already quoted from in the statement, "Man is but the highest in the animal kingdom, not a creature apart from it." This is a half truth which, in this connection, is absolutely misleading and false. Scripture declares that man is a creature apart from the rest of the created world, and man's history from the beginning has confirmed this statement. Man is immeasurably superior to any other living creature in the ability to think and provide, and the gap between him and his nearest of kin in the animal kingdom is continually widening.

But to return to New England ; a hardy, virtuous folk settled upon its more or less fertile virgin soil, lived simply and happily, multiplied rapidly and, for the most part, well—gave the children advantages of education far beyond those enjoyed by the average tillers of the soil, consumed Nature's store of fertility and—moved on. What does this all

mean? It has much meaning to those who consider the matter carefully; it teaches us many things, but it does not teach the usually accepted theory of food and population. The early New England farmers were a superior class of men, they had a good quantity and quality of brains, and they exercised them diligently. They were well "up" on matters pertaining to government and theology, could split hairs in social and theological casuistry, but—they planted by the moon!

I mean no disrespect; I think of them with reverence. I rejoice in their character and conscience. I am almost tempted to say that I am proud of the fact that they were above being ideal farmers at that time. They had better work to do than to study the highest and cheapest returns from an acre, and they did it. They gave the world its greatest lessons of individual freedom, and they sired a generation of offspring which was able to do ten-fold more for the world's food supply than they could have accomplished had they given their whole energies and talents to the task. But no part of New England is actually exhausted. This is shown by the fact that the humble peasant of Europe, coming with few needs and no æsthetic encumbrances, and bringing some knowledge of farm-

ing in the old world where virgin fertility has long ceased to be a factor in the agriculturist's calculations, will take these deserted farms and make them blossom as the rose ; by-and-by the grandson or great-grandson of the original occupant will perhaps come back and succeed in applying more agricultural science to the same acres, and obtain returns not dreamed of by the simple peasant farmer. It is madness to say, that in the matter of increase and food supply man is not a creature apart from the rest of creation, when he has almost a monopoly of brains now, and is rapidly improving in this respect, while his nearest of kin is at a standstill.

It has been well said that " the proof of the pudding is in the eating." If Malthus and John Stuart Mill and some other political economists are right in their theory of population and food supply, then this world has for thousands of years had a " tendency " towards bankruptcy, *i. e.*, has been gradually growing poorer in the ability to support the human life which it has produced. Is this true ? It most certainly is not. Judged by the ability of a day's human labor to purchase staple human food and clothing this decade has seen the easiest conditions of human life within the range of authentic his-

tory, and the world contains, to-day, more and better food, clothing, and other creature comforts per capita of the human family, than ever before. In other words, *food has multiplied more rapidly than mouths*. It may be claimed that this advantage is not a real, but only an apparent one. That man has simply been possessing himself of Nature's supply, and that while he is actually now in possession of a greater abundance than ever before he has discounted the resources of those who are to come after him. This is not true. Man's food is derived but partially from Nature's ready-made supply—the most of it comes from his own adaptation of means to ends, and represents that which Nature would never herself prepare for him.

John Stuart Mill admitted that improvement in agricultural science might be expected to do something, but he could not see that this would avert the calamity; it would, at the best, only defer the evil day for a little. He might as well have argued that the human family should stop multiplying because hand-loom could not produce textile fabrics to clothe those who would be born !

Political economists have been too much inclined to treat the material resources of Nature as a reservoir of supplies for man's

necessities. This is a short-sighted and false view of them. Nature produces the chick supplied with the yolk to give it nourishment for a little while; but Nature does not propose that the chick shall die when the "prepared nourishment" is exhausted! Material Nature is a machine and a laboratory—she furnishes man a few products of the machine to show him what it will produce and how to run it; and, as Nature is just and kind as well as wise, she has furnished man with food in the form of fish, game and wild plants to sustain him while he is learning to use the machine and the laboratory.

Even now it is estimated that human ingenuity and labor can produce from the soil 1,500 times as much as Nature herself produces from it; and as the lower animals are practically confined to Nature's production of food, this puts man at more than a thousand-fold advantage in the comparison.

Brains are the all-important factor in food supply.

We almost never find an agriculturist on virgin soil making the most of the science of his calling; he works in a more or less happy-go-lucky fashion, depends upon Nature's bounty and is almost sure to spend it. Another, working under apparently the hardest

natural conditions and forced to depend upon his own intelligence and wit, gets far better returns for his labor. I know of no more forcible illustration of this than the fact that while hundreds of New England farms have been abandoned to white birches ; and the "wheat belt," like Greeley's young man, is constantly "going West." The largest returns of food per acre are to be found in the old and thickly settled portions of the globe where the tiller of the soil begins by practically making his soil. Prince Krapotkine declares that the French market gardener has reduced this to so fine a point that he will in three years make a good market garden out of an asphalt pavement ! And after his garden is finished and producing large crops in the open air he will multiply its productiveness sixty-fold by covering it with glass and warming it with steam pipes !

In view of this no one may in fairness declare that *any* portion of the globe has yet been exhausted, or even used to the best advantage for the production of food.

But, it may be objected, other factors besides mere ground room enter into the problem. That is true. We must consider light, heat, water, power, and the chemical constituents of food. The sun supplies us, directly,



the light and most of the heat which we need, it *offers* us a practically unlimited supply of both just as soon as applied science is able to catch and harness them to the car of human industry. Science is working at this problem, and has already achieved success which ought to enthuse the mind of any who is not a hopeless pessimist. Water we have in abundance, and the problem of its distribution is a comparatively simple one. Power we already possess in abundance, in crude form, in the winds, tides, and waterfalls, which human ingenuity is continually making more and more available. Possibly these forms of power might, in the far future, fall short of our needs; but we have another and an inexhaustible one in the heat of the sun. It has been conceived that this may be our most available and our cheapest source of power even now, and this idea has already been materialized in a practical, working steam-engine run by heat from the direct rays of the sun. Transportation is simply a phase of power, except in the matter of power itself; and we have every reason to believe that recent discoveries in electricity will give us practically unlimited means for this.

We now come to the chemical constituents of plant food. It is already known that earth,

air, and water contain an abundance of them all, and that, with possibly a single exception, human ingenuity is able to make them available to a degree measured only by human labor within the conditions of paying returns. There is a possibility that available nitrogen may fall short of man's needs at some future time, but it does not appear probable; science is wrestling with the problem now, and is making most encouraging progress.\* What remains of this problem is, apparently, much simpler than other scientific puzzles which have been successfully solved during the last twenty years. It must be admitted that, under the most favorable conditions yet considered, *some* ground space is required for the plant life sufficient to support a human being. Our Malthusian brethren, with their keen vision for distant and hypothetical bridges, and their genius for falling into the hypothetical chasms which yawn beneath them, are already nervous about this matter, and even John Stuart Mill himself entertained gloomy visions of a time when, under such and such conditions, the earth would not afford standing-room for the human beings

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\* See Mr. Atkinson's article "Must Humanity Starve at Last ?" in the *Forum* for Aug., 1888.

who would be produced. If Mill could afford to be visionary, we may be pardoned for forecasting the future from our time and standpoint. As to food, an able scientist\* anticipates that we may yet manufacture human sustenance directly, without the aid of plant life at all, and that as many human beings may yet live comfortably upon this earth as to convert it into one vast city! From present information his vision seems far more likely to prove true than does that of the Malthusian.†

But, after all, there remains the hard fact that, in spite of the half million or so tons of "cosmic dust," which comes to us yearly, our earth's bulk is very nearly a known and stationary quantity, and that the human family is steadily growing in numbers.

Most certainly this cannot continue always.

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\* Siemens.

† W. C. Prime, LL.D. (quoted in *Public Opinion*, Dec. 7, 1889), declares that the State of Texas would furnish room for a separate grave for every human being born within the past 6,000 years, and all who will be born in 6,000 years to come. According to his estimate, a city the size of Florida would accommodate all the present members of the human family, and allow ample room for driveways, parks, etc.

Is there in Nature a *tendency* that it shall continue until man is actually short of possible food and lodging, and forced to die of want, or else turn freebooter and kill his neighbor, either directly or indirectly. Mill believed this, and he practically so stated it.

He saw the human family going round and round in a succession of births, lives, and deaths; he noted that the births were, on the whole, more numerous than the deaths, so that the curve formed an eccentric spiral—man improved his condition a little, in some respects, each generation; but the circle was always widening and must, soon or late, exhaust the capacities of this earth. He practically assumed that the ratio of natural increase was a constant number, and that final disaster could only be averted by artificial means.

Mill admits that the human family has not actually increased nearly up to its possible rate of doubling in each twenty-five years or less. Indeed, we find that the estimated population of the earth and the estimated number of years since man appeared upon it show a doubling in only several hundred years. In accounting for this discrepancy Mill mentions war, pestilence, famine, etc. If there really is a "tendency" for man to increase

beyond his means of subsistence, then there certainly must be checks, and if Nature has provided war, pestilence, and famine for this purpose, then we must adore war, pestilence, and famine. The idea is not an agreeable one, and until I see more cogent reasons than now exist, I shall decline to entertain it. This idea assumes that the Creator made a mistake when he created the world and gave man his instincts and environment, and then corrected the mistake by means of war, pestilence, famine, etc. Even were I not a believer in the Bible and the wise, omnipotent, and kind Eternal Father whom it reveals, I could not believe this, for I see too much evidence of design and of fitness of means to ends in this world, especially in man and his environment.

Von Moltke calls war "The Sister of Religion," and recent German political economists are wont to dwell on the idea that it is of great value in stimulating invention and calling out man's general effectiveness, and so encouraging, indirectly, at least, the arts and industries.

It is difficult to conceive in what respect war as an educator or stimulator of human activity is superior to peaceful callings, and it is itself a pensioner upon the bounty of the

latter. Those who are killed in war are, as a rule, best fitted to do useful work with brain or hand, and it is difficult to conceive how any candid, not to say sane, person can imagine that their removal could benefit the remainder of mankind, even though the world were overstocked with humanity.

Pestilence destroys a vast amount of economic value, but, as it is largely caused by conditions arising from man's ignorance or crime, it must be regarded as of some use as an educator, and in as far as it tends to rid the world of the hopelessly ignorant and depraved, it may be regarded as a positive good. Famine is certainly an educator ; it almost always occurs in regions where, taking the years together, sufficient food is produced, but owing to a lack of providence, too little is stored for the contingency of one or more bad harvests ; it also teaches the danger of unwise massing of humanity. Incidentally all three of these "checks" to population stimulate compassion and self-denial on the part of some, and thus contribute towards the general weal. But allowing them all possible credit, the debit side shows a stupendous balance, and we dare not look upon pestilence and famine as other than terrible human misfortunes which it is the duty of

the wise and strong to avert from the ignorant and weak.

But these are not the only "checks" to population. There is another slow but sure check which Nature herself has provided to prevent this world from becoming actually overpopulated. This is found in the law that fecundity is in inverse ratio to means for self-defence and support. We see this clearly among plants and the lower animals, and there seems no doubt that it holds good of man ; and that although the "slowing up" of his ratio of increase is very gradual, yet it is a constant factor in the population problem and bears a definite relation to man's moral, mental, and physical status.

John Stuart Mill says, "The power of multiplication inherent in all organic life may be regarded as infinite." When one confines his view to the lower and simpler forms of organic life this might seem to be true, for individuals of this class multiply so easily and rapidly, and the conditions making their weal are so simple that nothing but lack of food or space to grow will limit their reproduction. This also holds true in regard to some individuals belonging to higher orders among fauna and flora ; rabbits will multiply enormously and so will many kinds of weeds, and

even some of the trees, such as the locust and the white birch multiply rapidly by root or seed. In regard to these there seem to be no checks to multiplication which are inherent in the individual itself, and the external checks are so insufficient that in self-defence man must wage continual warfare against them. But when we come to higher specimens of organic life we find the conditions changed; reproduction does not take place up to the full limit of food and space. A sugar-maple or an oak will frequently stand alone for many years, perhaps its whole lifetime, without reproducing itself by root or seed—countless seeds had been produced and apparently matured; many of these had germinated and grown for a few weeks or months, but the subtle and all important fitness for survival was lacking, and they soon died—yet there was a plenty of space in earth and air and no lack of suitable food, as proved by the prosperity of a grove of the same trees carefully set out by the gardener.

The elephant is a rare and costly animal and has at no time been very abundant because he belongs to a class that is so well provided with means for self-defence and support that Nature has given him but a limited power of increase.



There are many minnows, few whales ; many guinea-pigs, few hippopotami ; and so we might go on multiplying examples of this law that Nature balances small ability with great fecundity, and the reverse. When we come to man we find the same law, but it is no longer the simple matter that it is among plants and the lower animals—except as man has modified them—here we find this law of ability and fecundity a complex matter, sometimes acting in an uncertain manner, and again seeming to positively reverse the conditions of its operation on the lower planes. But the discrepancy is not real, only apparent. Man is not fixed in his material status in the sense in which the lower forms of life are, his intellect lifts him out of the rôle of a patient waiter upon Nature's bounty and makes him largely the creator of his own status ; he may use his birthright and steadily improve his condition, or he may neglect it and fall to the level of the defenceless brutes so that Nature has to step in and compensate his lack of ability to think and provide for himself by giving him an excess of numbers for a time. Or man may be crowded into this status temporarily by the interference of his oppressors. In a peculiar sense Nature deals with man not only as a genus

but as classes and even as individuals of the genus.

The few Israelites seemed to have little chance as against their subtle and powerful masters, the Egyptians, but when the master took away from the servant the freedom and independence which fostered thought and made him a *man*, he crowded the slave down to the condition of a helpless brute, and Nature promptly applied the remedy and multiplied him until he was able by his very numbers, to defend himself. Something of the same sort we have seen in connection with slavery in our own land, and the echo of it is still heard in the rapid increase of our colored population, but the exciting cause is being removed and the effect will doubtless in time wear off, and the blacks will increase no faster than the whites.\*

Times of general peace, prosperity, and agreeable mental exaltation are times of marked fecundity in man ; this was seen early in this century when we had finished our struggles for independence and settled down to the enjoyment of a well-earned peace and the cultivation of a well-tried manhood and womanhood.

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\* The latest statistics show them to be decreasing in comparison.

We lack statistics to show the exact ratio of the "slowing down" process in human increase, and if we had them, the problem would be a complex one, because if man as a genus was ever so low down in the scale of being as to nearly approach the brutes it was so long ago that no record of him has reached us ; "prehistoric man" exists to-day in remote regions of the globe, and individuals of the earliest "historic" man showed a mental development which approached, if, indeed, it did not exceed the average of our own times. But among classes of individuals of the human race it has been shown repeatedly, and from the earliest authentic history that man multiplies in inverse ratio to his mental development, and his ability to seize and hold material advantages. Nature seems to be on the side of the weaker in this respect, and evidently intends that the fully "evolved" man of the distant future shall not represent any single class or a few classes but the highest and best of man as a whole. The study of human fecundity is made peculiarly difficult by the fact of wilful barrenness ; but we have many instances of barrenness when there can be no charge of intentional childlessness ; and from these we may learn much.

Barrenness among brutes is very rare ; the

average among married couples of the human family is not far from five in a hundred, but among the British nobility it is said to be as high as seventeen in a hundred. In this case childlessness certainly is not intentional—on the contrary it is usually the result of subtle and unknown causes, and persists in spite of the aid of the highest medical and surgical skill known to our age.

As regards rate of healthy normal increase we may divide man into three classes—high, low, and middle—the latter may be divided into two sub-classes each of which will be larger than either of the extremes. Safety lies along the median line, and as we might expect, net increase is greatest in the middle class. Among those of great wealth and high social position the birth rate is less than the death rate. Their ranks are renewed to some extent by new material from the upper-middle class, but, in spite of this, luxury and vice continually lessen their numbers, and they are losing ground relatively to the class below them. Something of the same sort is taking place in the lowest stratum of society; the very poor exchange a few members with the lower-middle class; temporarily and locally they may be more or less relatively to that class, but, as a whole, they are losing ground,

not so much because of a low birth rate, but because privation and vice lead to a high death rate. It is to the great middle class that we must look for the normal operation of human increase. This class is not divided from the others by any closely drawn lines of wealth and position on the one side nor of poverty and lack of social standing on the other. I would include all whose wealth, no matter how great, does not lead them into the vices of the rich—including the vice of enervating luxury—and all whose poverty does not amount to a lack of the necessities of life, nor lead them into the peculiar vices of the poor. I believe it is as easy for the rich as for the poor to be respectable, and that the latter have fully as many class temptations as do the former. In this great middle class we find two movements. The class as a whole has a birth rate markedly greater than the death rate; no part of it, except it be temporarily, has a birth rate below the death rate. but the excess of births is found mostly in the lower-middle class which includes all those who are hand-workers rather than brain-workers. It is a question whether the actual normal "slowing down" of the human birth rate takes place in this lower-middle class; I believe it does not. The second movement is

that the upper-middle class, which includes the distinctively brain-workers, is gradually absorbing the lower class and is "slowing down" in its birth rate. Its death rate is also lessening, but not so rapidly as its birth rate.

Nature clearly is interested in quality rather than quantity in her highest creation, man ; but quality is attained by an evolutionary process, and seems to require that quantity shall be great enough to fully populate and *possess* this earth before there shall be the best conditions for perfection of the quality. As will be shown, large numbers and division of labor are essential to the highest form of civilization. At present a great deal of so-called unskilled labor is absolutely necessary to society, and there will be need of it for centuries to come, but it will be superseded more and more by brains working through machinery, and the machinery itself will be more and more complicated and delicate so that the running of it will be a high class of brain-work, and eventually there may be no unskilled labor class at all. It is not unreasonable to assume that this may take place within the time required for the complete population of the globe, and when every one belongs to the brain-working class reproduction, which is primarily and essentially a physical

matter, will have exchanged quantity of physical humanity for quality of humanity as a whole, and there will be equilibrium between the birth and death rates. Whether in that far future the "slowing down" process will continue until finally man becomes an extinct animal, or whether he will be able by careful attention to the matter to keep his numbers, we cannot tell; that is a bridge at which we have not yet arrived.

A venerable popular idea is expressed in the words, "The rich are growing richer, and the poor are growing poorer." Those who believe this will question my statement that the current of population is setting towards the upper-middle class—the brain-workers. The rich are growing richer, but the poor are not growing poorer. They are growing rich more rapidly, relatively, than the rich are. The census of our country since 1850 shows the per capita wealth; it is as follows: 1850, \$308; 1860, \$514; 1870, \$780; 1880, \$870. This is a remarkable showing; few, if any, other countries have equaled us in this respect, yet the per capita wealth has markedly increased all through the civilized world during this time. We lack satisfactory statistics to show just what proportion of this wealth has been in the hands of the rich, and

how much has accrued to the comparatively poor;\* but two or three significant economic facts show us the trend of the current of wealth, and we cannot gainsay this showing. The economic availability of the upper-middle class consists of capital and the skill to employ it. The economic availability of the lower-middle class consists of hand labor. During these decades we have imported very little of either capital or the skill to use it, but our own stock of these has been "watered" by a steady stream of unskilled labor which would have ruined almost any other people in christendom. The rate of interest is steadily declining; the rate of

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\* According to a recent and intelligent estimate (Mr. Shearman, of New York, quoted in *The Illustrated London News*, December 7, 1889), the conspicuously wealthy men of our country number 117, and their aggregate wealth is about \$3,500,000,000. As the whole wealth of the country is about \$65,000,000,000, this makes *less than one-eighteenth* in the hands of the extremely rich. The further fact that the fathers or grandfathers of nearly all these millionaires were actually or comparatively poor, and that a large share of these immensely rich people were once themselves humble workers, helps the view that all classes have a fair opportunity to acquire wealth, and that the poor man stands a better chance to become a capitalist than the latter has to retain his position.



wages is steadily rising.\* The expenditure of public funds is dominated more and more by the needs and demands of the lower-middle class, less and less by the special needs and demands of the upper-middle class. Supply and demand control prices; and the prices of capital and labor show that the supply of unskilled labor is lessening relatively to capital. It is most remarkable that this should be the case in America, for, besides importing vast numbers of laborers, we lead the world in the invention and use of mechanical contrivances which do the work once done by hand. A few hundred years more of this tendency of the social and industrial extremes to be destroyed by vice and a low birth rate, or by vice and a high death rate; and of the brain-workers to absorb the hand-workers, will very likely bring about the singular state of things that the supply of those who, by the smallness of their abilities, are compelled to be hand-workers, will be very small compared with the amount of hand-work which will be necessary even with all the mechanism and applied science then

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\* We will not juggle with words about the value of money. I mean that interest is falling, and labor is rising in ability to buy the necessities of life.

available. This will work a curious and salutary change in society. It is hardly to be expected that the supply of hand laborers can then be drawn from the well-to-do and educated; a few such might prefer hand labor, and a few more might be moved to this from a spirit of benevolence; but still the supply would fall far short of the demand. With this state of things it would naturally follow that all foolish prejudice against labor would disappear, and fashion would declare it "good form," and even meritorious for persons to perform "menial" offices for themselves. This custom would cultivate the physical part of man much better than is the present rule among the upper-middle class, and would have a tendency to preserve the brain-working class from dangers which now threaten it.

Thus it appears that in the case of man the usual tendency of the relation between food and increase is reversed—there being a tendency for food to increase at a greater ratio than population, and for the latter to finally cease to increase, or actually to decrease.

But there is a vast amount of poverty, suffering, and crime in the world, especially in the large cities. This is the stumbling-block of the Malthusian, and he regards large families as the cause of it. Is he right? In

answering the question we will consider what is taught about it in the book which has been the inspiration and the guide for human progress during thousands of years, and will then consider how this teaching may be regarded in the light of history. The keynote is struck in Gen. 1 : 28, when God gave His first commandment to man ; and it is well to note that the command is yoked to a blessing. We read, "And God blessed them ; and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it ; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." This is the key, and in it is sung all through the inspired Word the song of man's progress and happiness. He who "maketh the barren woman to keep house and be the joyful mother of children," declared the children to be a heritage from Himself, and from the first made man's highest temporal comfort and happiness to go hand in hand with the duty of fruitfulness. The whole authentic history of mankind goes to show that the healthy individual of the human species has always had a tendency to produce more than he consumed, and that the surplus which he left behind him either directly or indirectly con-

duced to the advantage of all mankind ; so that from the first, resources for human life have been increasing by a sort of geometrical progression ; moreover, when individuals are few, life must always be simple and crude. When each individual must serve himself through the whole range of personal needs, he can scarcely become an expert in any form of the service, much less have opportunity for devising improved methods. As man continued to be fruitful and finally multiplied to the extent of replenishing a small corner of the earth, he found himself able to make use of division of labor ; out of this idea grew natural selection in industry, by which the individual was served by others in regard to the more easily satisfied needs, while he himself worked at that which he could do best—so in time it came about that some did no manual labor at all, but worked with the intellect alone. This was only possible after many individuals were massed together, and it is fostered in direct proportion to the number of normal individuals. From the first it has been true that brains counted for vastly more than muscle in human weal, and disparity between them has constantly increased with the facilities for division of labor until now it may be regarded

that a pound of brain is worth more than a ton of muscle. Again, the many can be served at a less cost per capita than the few, because it costs proportionately less to produce much than to produce little. Theoretically, then, the good of all lies in the direction of increase of numbers, and this agrees with the observed fact that human convenience and comfort have advanced *pari passu* with population. This is remarkable when we consider that from the earliest times there have been those who were generally "unfit," and were a direct burden upon others, and that even of the "fit" ones but a small percentage live in such a way as to come nearly up to a possible standard of human effectiveness. As man has grown rich in all material resources under these disadvantages we must conclude that when the Creator made man and gave him his environment He made the odds decidedly in his favor, so much so, indeed, that he is able to accumulate without more than half trying. The illustrations of overpopulation and overcrowding of human beings so that the conditions of life are too narrow and severe to make life seem desirable are mostly derived from the semi-civilized peoples, or from the great cities in civilized lands. Not one of these is, strictly speak-

ing, a case of too many individuals having been born, but only of their injudicious massing or of their improvidence or vice. We frequently hear of severe famine in India or elsewhere, but it is almost invariably in a section of country which, taking the years together, produces much food for export to some other section.

Human nature is always prone to measure its income by the years of plenty, and living up to this standard as long as opportunity offers, to suffer in the years of famine. This happens over and over until finally the lesson of frugality and providence is learned. Experience is not obtained vicariously, and probably the people who are the most provident now passed through this phase of "evolution" at some time. The increase of population is bringing about a corresponding decrease in the frequency, and the extent of famines from improvidence, because it causes greater facilities for transportation, makes trade a sort of mutual insurance by enabling producers to buy, in their need, on pledges of future crops, and increases the number and ability of those who are moved with compassion for their suffering fellow-men whoever or wherever they may be. Not long ago an appeal was made here in Boston for

aid for famine-stricken ones in India, and the case was brought, as it were, to our very doors by the statement that the telegraph would enable the contributions to buy the food, and start it on its way to the sufferers from their nearest market within two hours! In all the large cities we find a vast amount of suffering; if the destitute had not been born, they would certainly not have suffered; shall we then jump to the conclusion that Nature has a tendency to produce human beings whom she cannot provide for? "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London" shows a sickening phase of human life, and has stirred philanthropic minds and hearts to the depths; but the poverty and suffering in London are mostly the result of vice, and a large share of virtuous poor in all cities prefer to live in the city and suffer rather than go into the country and enjoy plenty under more simple and wholesome conditions of life.

New York city is crowded with suffering poor who are well able to work; and within three hours by rail are thousands of farmers and others who would gladly hire them at wages which would insure a comfortable support; but they prefer to starve and freeze in the city. New England is

being given up largely to grazing, grass, and timber, simply because farm labor is so exorbitant that it does not pay the farmer to raise anything which he cannot take care of, single-handed and alone, with the help of machinery. I do not refer to exhausted farms, but to those in good condition of productiveness.

The excessive massing of clerks, shop-girls, and others in the large cities is the cause of much misery in itself, and is almost always taken advantage of by unscrupulous and unthinking employers, to secure service at a compensation less than will furnish a suitable support for the employed, and very much less than will enable them to care for a family of children. It is from this class that the Malthusians derive their most plausible illustrations. The argument is this: Here are many men and women who are honest, industrious, and fairly capable; they have constant employment at average market prices for the service performed; they are frugal, and yet they are absolutely unable to provide comfortably and properly for themselves and a family of children; *ergo*, Nature has made a mistake in making them liable to become parents, and they must correct her mistake and protect themselves by removing the pos-



sibility of children being born to them. This is a superficial view of the case. Revelation and Nature agree in saying that he who will not work may not eat, but that he who would work but cannot may eat at the expense of him who will and can. Nature has provided so liberally for all that those who are able to work can easily support themselves and those dependent upon them. But Nature has not provided for harmful waste, nor for individuals in the wrong places. If twenty-five per cent. of the human race is where it has no business to be, and the most of the rest waste, or worse than waste, from ten to twenty per cent of the resources with which Nature furnishes them, what can we expect but that suffering and sin will follow? But we certainly have a right to expect that so intelligent and honest people as Malthus and many of his disciples would have more intelligence, discrimination, and common-sense than to jump to the conclusion that the cause of all the trouble is the birth of too many people. Starvation wages in shops, factories, etc., are partly the fault of human greed and heartlessness on the part of capital, but they are more the fault of human ignorance and pride on the part of labor. Where labor is underpaid it is always found that it is too

anxious to be just in that place. There are too many hands, or, if not too many, they are willing to sacrifice something for the sake of being in that position; in either case the labor market is depressed, and it is largely out of the power of the capitalist to mend matters, even if he would. Until the millennium comes in, and justice has finally triumphed over selfishness, supply and demand must control prices. There are too many young men in Boston who are anxious to keep books, and too many young women who would like to sell laces and ribbons; so the clerk and the shop-girl are underpaid, and must be so long as they are too anxious to do these things. The clerk and the shop-girl are not wholly to blame for this over-anxiety to fill these positions; it is in part prompted by the "divine discontent" which urges every human being to do and be something better. Ignorance and silly pride suggest that this or that form of service is more "genteel" than another; and for this the "elders and betters" of the clerk and the shop-girl are largely to blame. It is a simple thing to say that about half the actual or would-be clerks ought to go to farming, and half the overworked and underpaid shop-girls ought to marry or go into so-called

“domestic service”; but the solution of the problem is not so easy as that. Such reforms work from the top. Agriculture must become more attractive before it will attract; and the family idea must be cultivated and exalted before “domestic service” will become theoretically and practically a high-grade, attractive form of employment. I believe that the exhaustion of the earth’s virgin soil and the encouragement of large families, instead of bringing want and ruin, as the Malthusian believes, will conduce to abundance and prosperity. So long as the farmer can depend upon natural fertility of the soil, just so long will agriculture have in it a flavor of happy-go-lucky, low-grade industry, and the agricultural employé will be considered, and will look upon himself, as a low-grade workman. When the agriculturist is obliged to practically create the fertility of his soil, and farming becomes largely a matter of chemistry, it will be recognized that it requires as many brains to raise crops as to sell goods, and the supply of assistants in both forms of industry will be regulated by honest demand rather than by foolish sentiment.

If women of education and wealth consider housekeeping a sort of low-grade drudgery, and they and their husbands regard children as

accidental encumbrances, how can we expect the office of the general housemaid or the nurse-girl to be attractive and respectable in the eyes of the young woman who has education and address enough for teaching a primary school or selling pins and needles.

The Malthusian points with pride to the comparative conditions of the English and French peasantry. Does the Malthusian forget that France has made it easy for the peasant to own a bit of soil and work for himself, and that England has practically forbidden him to own land, and forced him to work for another? Can any fair and candid view of English poverty and crime leave out England's enormous consumption of beer and spirit, and the immense tracts of cultivatable land which are kept as game preserves for the amusement of the rich?

There is another factor in the problem of English poverty as compared with French thrift; and that is colonizatiou. For more than a quarter thousand years England has been pouring the flower of her men and women into other parts of the world; but the dregs of her society have remained behind, despite the fact that Botany Bay has received a few of her criminals, and an occasional worthless adventurer has crossed the sea voluntarily, and

a few paupers may have been aided by England "to leave their country for their country's good." "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London" represents in a measure, the poverty and distress which by right belong to Canada, Australia, New South Wales, and even the United States, for it is doubtless true that some of it is a natural inheritance from those who were poor and distressed as far back as the time when the *Mayflower* brought over the seed for a great nation. But this is not all, if we must subtract these lees from England's debit, we must also credit her with the clear, rich wine which has been poured off and sent away.

Let us make a fair statement of the case. We will assume that England and France stood on a par, two hundred years ago, as regards population, poverty, and thrift. This will probably be fair to France. Now, let us look at the result. England has within her own borders somewhat more poverty than France has within her borders; but England has a greater aggregate of sturdy manhood and of the qualities which enable a people to "lend a hand" to the sisterhood of nations, than France has, within the strictly national boundaries, I mean. Now, let us look abroad. What has England there? The descendants

of her sturdy and prolific sires and dames number several times the whole population of France and dominate North America, Australia, India, and many islands of the sea with a spirit and an enterprise which have carried civilization and prosperity wherever they have gone.

What have the French outside of France? Almost nothing which they care to claim.

In Canada their name is well nigh a synonym, for hewers of wood and drawers of water; and in the United States they are from a quarter to a half century behind the times! A little positive value outweighs a deal of negative virtue. The strength and worth of a people are measured by the number of normal men and women it has, rather than by the abnormal ones which it has not. If, as the disciples of Malthus claim, the small French family is the practical result of their doctrine, then their illustration is a sword which cuts the hand that holds it. England's service to mankind at large has been rendered mostly through colonization, and this service is like mercy in that it has been twice blessed, blessing him who gives and him who receives; and England's colonization has come about because the Anglo-Saxon's large family forced him to send some

of his children abroad ! Poor humanity has always laid the flattering unction to its soul that it was possible to get something for nothing, to attain the fruition of a duty without performing the duty itself ; but humanity has always been bitterly mistaken. There is no short cut by which a people may attain prosperity, happiness, and usefulness, in the best sense of the words, without obeying the injunction to be fruitful and multiply. It is a significant fact that France is becoming seriously alarmed at her decreasing birth rate. Will she repeat the history of the corrupt Roman Empire, which was constrained to offer a large bounty for each child born, but the attempted repentance came too late, and when the Roman power died it was a virtual suicide ? ”

Were Malthus alive to-day he would, I doubt not, be shocked at the theories and practices which bear his name. Probably he never intended to teach other prevention of human increase than that which follows from caution not to marry before having assurance of support for wife and children. But Malthus built his creed upon mistaken premises, and it is not to be wondered at that the results have become appalling.

The writer of the pamphlet already re-

ferred to, who finds in large families the cause of the poverty and crime in our cities, refers only incidentally to intemperance in this connection, and naïvely ascribes *that* to the large families ! If this be true then the poor-houses and jails throughout christendom will show that the great majority of inmates are either parents or children of especially large families. I challenge any one to show that this is a rule ; on the contrary a goodly number of children, in the case of those who are fit to become parents at all, is a restraining and stimulating influence, and the man with a wife and a half dozen children is much less likely to be found in the jail or poorhouse than the man with no family at all, or with only a wife. As regards the children, it has been proven thousands of times that those who have a number of brothers and sisters are, on an average, better brought up, and are generally more “available,” than those having but one, or none. It may safely be set down as a rule that those who are fit to be the parents of one child may properly care for a half dozen if they are content to live according to their means and station, and keep free from vice. But many are not fit to become the parents of a single child ; they or their “forbears” have sinned away the



birthright to live in posterity. The more children such people produce the worse off they are, and the worse off is humanity at large. Like produces like, poverty and crime are largely hereditary, and comparatively few families make up the majority of the inmates of jails and poorhouses.

There are certainly many men and women who ought never to become parents, and I believe society will yet devise a practical and just means to prevent it; but this gives us no argument for the idea that the world is in danger of becoming overpopulated. If this class might have the world and all its present resources entirely to itself, it would succeed in overpopulating it long before it became as numerous as the earth's present population; while, on the other hand, a people free from vice might find, or produce, sufficient resources to support a hundred-fold the present population. It may serve the immediate purpose of the Malthusian to treat intemperance as a comparatively small factor in human woe, and claim that even it is caused by large families, but it is neither candid nor honest.

Statistics show clearly that the quality, rather than the quantity, of a family determines its ability for self-support, and in-

temperance is an appalling agent for deteriorating human energy, and making the individual incapable of taking care of himself. Statistics show that we spend about \$1,500,000,000, a year for tobacco and liquor.

There are many other vices besides intemperance which lead to poverty and crime, but it is within bounds to say that if the one evil of intemperance might be done away with, our jails and poorhouses would be almost needless.

Malthus was doubtless sincere in his belief that human woe was only to be averted by the limitation of human increase, and his remedy or "check," if impossible, was, at least, a pure one; but since his time many of his disciples have adopted another and a possible "check" which, however plausible it may appear from their standpoint, and however brilliant it may seem when set forth in the figures and words with which they present it, fails to appeal to the physician who is best acquainted with its practical working; and is quite enough to fill the mind of the student of statistics with consternation.

Wholesale and systematic prevention of conception is their remedy; and, whatever may have been their achievements in other parts of the world, their success has been so marked

in the northern portions of the United States of America that it is almost impossible to find a native family which is not more or less influenced by their theory, even if it has not actually adopted their practice, and, in New England at least, practice has followed theory to an alarming extent. The idea that the natural increase of human life is a cause for concern leads to a low estimate of its value, and when those who attempt to prevent conception find themselves unsuccessful they are, as a rule, comparatively easily led to prevent the incipient human life from coming to maturity and birth. Malthusians may controvert this as they will, but the fact remains, and any experienced and candid general practitioner in medicine can testify to that effect. Among native Americans abortion has become frightfully frequent, and its effect upon the health of our women and the quantity and quality of their offspring is appalling. Dr. Emmet, of New York, believes that more misery is caused in a single day by the attempt to avoid the natural parental relation than in a month by uncomplicated labor. But it is those who regard the future political and social welfare of our country who have the most cause for alarm. It is stating the case mildly to say

that, in the older sections, the native population is dying out—it is literally being slaughtered by the wholesale. A recent canvass among the patients of a physician, in one of the New England capitals, showed that the children averaged but  $1\frac{8}{10}$  to a family;  $\frac{3}{8}$  of the married couples having none at all; and the showing would have been worse but for a few foreign and old native families, which were much above the average. The Malthusian does not propose that there shall be no children born; he is of the opinion that, under favorable circumstances, it would be well for married couples to have “a child” or “two children.” It would be a wholesome experience for him to do a little figuring in involution, and see how long it would take to exterminate the human race at this rate; a few generations would accomplish it. Indeed, if the average rate of increase were no greater than that in this instance, man would become an extinct animal in less than five hundred years.\*

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\* Some time ago I had occasion to make an estimate of the number of births necessary to each married couple in order to preserve our present population, allowing for the average “expectation of life,” and the instances of failure to marry, or of unavoidable barrenness among the married. I estimated that four births to each couple

When the Creator made man, He not only commanded him to be fruitful and multiply, but He took care that such instincts and passions should enter into the very warp and woof of his mental and physical being, as would insure his obeying the command, or else compel him to a constant and damaging warfare with himself. Our divorce courts, and the offices of gynæcologists are overrun with men and women who have attempted to live together not "according to the ordinances of God"; and among them we find that better class of so-called Malthusians who believe that parenthood need not necessarily follow marriage, and should, in any case, be undertaken with great caution after considering all the pros and cons: and should then be preceded by "several months of special mental preparation," etc., etc.

Their argument is, that the reproductive faculty in man, like all others, should be brought fully under the control of the culti-

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capable of producing children would only keep our numbers good, and that five would only allow for a moderate increase. Mr. Grant Allen, in an excellent article in *The Fortnightly Review*, for September, 1889, entitled, "Plain Words on the Woman Question," comes to virtually the same conclusion, putting the number at four in one case, and at six in the other.

vated will—that the arbitrary “Thou shalt,” and “Thou shalt not” were for the infancy of the human race, and are now outgrown, as regards the more cultivated men and women. Their position may appear well to the philosopher, not so well to the gynæcologist.

There are laws which we can never outgrow. The decalogue and the “eleventh” commandment, for instance ; and I believe we may include Gen. 1: 28, in the number.

I know by the experiences of my private consultation room, that so-called Malthusians who believe that no risk of parenthood should be taken by those who do not feel perfectly willing to undertake its obligations, and who are exceptionally situated for carrying out this idea, may “accidentally” undertake parenthood, and “unwittingly” cause abortions !

If such cases occur in the green tree what must we expect in the dry ? Do we need any more forcible illustration of the difficulty and danger of attempting to improve upon the arrangements of the Creator, and live together in a better way than “according to the ordinances of God” ? I believe not.

The idea of man’s eventually developing, mentally and morally, so that the instincts and passions of the physical shall be wholly

under the control of the higher nature, and shall be guided wisely and well, is a noble one ; and I believe humanity is working toward that end. I believe we have a right to hope that, sometime in the future, man will be so worthy, conscientious, and judicious that the Creator will see fit to trust him with the mysteries of reproduction ; but that time has not yet come ; the history of the attempt to control the birth rate shows, that it is almost invariably influenced by outright lust, or by desire for selfish ease. Under the most favorable conditions parenthood calls for some degree of temporary self-control and self-sacrifice ; and the number of those who cannot persuade themselves that it is proper to escape or postpone it is very small indeed.

The idea of undergoing "several months of special mental preparation " before undertaking parenthood, would seem an excellent one, and yet there are two most important points in heredity which militate against it ; the first is that "several months" are too short a time in which to materially improve the future child's general hereditary chances ; the other is that the child's special hereditary susceptibility is during the months immediately following its conception, rather than during those preceding it. It would seem a

good thing if humanity might be sure of "several months of special mental preparation" for death; but such an arrangement would, in all probability, tend to the putting off of the day of preparation until that time came, and to a marked lowering of man's moral average. It is as difficult and dangerous to trust to "cramming" for parenthood as for death!

The command to be fruitful and multiply was given to those who were well; not to the sick—to the worthy, not to the unworthy. The blessing, like the command, was for the former, not for the latter. If any have acquired, either by inheritance or otherwise, the moral, mental, or physical disability to perform the duty and receive the blessing, he should be persuaded, or, it may be, compelled, to spare future generations the burden of his incapable descendants; he has no right to congratulate himself as one who is helping to correct Nature's mistake; he is, in a sense, one of the "incapables," and deserves the contempt or, at least, the pity of his fellow-men.

The question how to induce or compel the unfit to remain childless is a grave and difficult one. Probably it cannot find a complete answer until society has attained a much



higher moral and intellectual plane than its present one. The Malthusian remedy works against the very end it would accomplish, for the reason that those most likely to adopt its theory and practice are the very ones who are, or ought to be, best fitted to serve society in the capacity of progenitors, while the great mass of the morally and physically unfit are incapable of self-control and would continue to produce offspring.\* A move in the right direction would be to have uniform marriage laws in all our States and Territories, and to have such laws take cognizance of the moral, mental, and physical condition of those applying for marriage licenses. This would, at first, be objected to, doubtless, as unwarrantable interference with private right, but, in time, the better part of the community would recognize that the guardians of the public weal have as much right to prevent those having hopeless and transmissible disease of mind or body from marrying, as they have to nail a danger signal on the street door of the Governor's house, if contagious disease is in it; and public sentiment has long recognized the justice and propriety of

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\* The eminent English scientist, Francis Galton, F. R. S., takes this view of the case. Letter to the writer, September, 1890.

this. Laws will not execute themselves ; there must be penalties for breaking them ; and those who *cannot*, of their own volition, observe them, must be compelled to do so. But a very small part of those who are unfit to marry and become parents can be prevented by moral suasion ; at least nine-tenths would require compulsion.

The mawkish sentimentality which lavishes bouquets and bonbons upon the condemned murderer seems to dominate society at present, and would doubtless raise a hue and cry against compulsory childlessness, even of criminals and paupers ; but we have a right to hope for the speedy dawn of a better day, and that when its sun shall have climbed to the zenith it may look down upon a society so cultivated, wise, and just that it will have the will and the way to intercept the streams of crime and corruption which are now constantly pouring into it by transporting the unfit ones to islands of the sea, each sex by itself ; or by other and more sure means.

The moral, mental, and physical ills which grow directly or indirectly from the effort of the married to escape the obligation to be fruitful and multiply, and which are to be observed in the minds and persons of the guilty ones, have been barely alluded to in

this article; the physician is, of all persons, best fitted to set them forth in all their appalling repulsiveness; but the recital is not fit for general literature.

In summing up the points of this matter I would add :

*First*, There is no likelihood of this earth ever being overpopulated. Man's actual rate of increase has only amounted to a doubling in several hundred years; it being estimated that every human being ever born might have a separate grave in the state of Texas, and that Florida is large enough for comfortable homes for all who now live.

*Second*, The idea that human beings, because of numbers, are, or are likely, to become a drug in the market leads to a low estimate of human life, and tends to a lowering of the quality as well as the quantity. The deliberate repression of normal human increase in France is already a matter of grave anxiety on the part of her clearest sighted citizens; and in the older section of our own country, and among the so-called "upper classes," births are so infrequent that, the same ratio of increase being universal, man would soon become an extinct animal; four births to each married couple being necessary to keep our present numbers.

*Third,* Food is increasing more rapidly than mouths. Where the conditions of human life are too hard for proper employment and comfortable support, it will be found, almost always, that the quality of human life is culpably or criminally low, or else that the massing is foolish and unnecessary.

*Fourth,* The average, normal, healthy individual produces, directly or indirectly, more than he consumes, and leaves the world better off than he found it; and the first and most important factor in national, family, and individual weal is that the largest possible number of such should be born.

*Fifth,* Society is weakened and endangered by hereditary incapacity and crime, and has a right to say that paupers and criminals shall not become progenitors.

*Sixth,* Children are an important and well-nigh indispensable factor of a happy marriage, and actual or attempted childlessness is one of the frequent causes of divorce.

H. S. POMEROY.

BOSTON, MASS.





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